



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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Colossians 2:1-15 **New International Version** **June 23, 2019**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, June 23, 2019**, is from **Colossians 2:1-15**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(Colossians 2:1) I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.

Paul expressed deep concern for the Christians and churches he had never visited. Imprisoned in Rome, Paul could not rush to these churches to help these Christians. Paul struggled as one contending against hostile spiritual forces to know what to do for them. He prayed fervently and specifically as he thought of what these Christians and

churches faced and the type of help they needed from resources that He prayed for God to supply. Then, Paul wrote a Holy Spirit inspired letter to build up the faith, spiritual endurance, and courage of those under attack from various directions, from false ideas, from unbelievers, and from those committed to false gods and religions.

(Colossians 2:2) My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,

Jesus Christ, including His ministry, His death on the cross, and His resurrection was the mystery that the Old Testament pointed toward but could not reveal until God the Father sent His only Son into the world. Through faith in Jesus Christ and His presence within believers and His spiritual presence in the Church as the Body of Christ, the readers of Paul's letters (inspired by the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer) would receive the courage to face their enemies and defeat them. They would maintain their love for Jesus and one another. They would understand the teachings and truths about Jesus, and they would understand the sources and reasons for their recent trials. They would know that Christ with and within them was their hope of glory, as Paul had written in Colossians 1:27, "To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ

in you, the hope of glory.” They could trust Jesus Christ as their salvation no matter what or who they struggled against, as Paul could testify from prison in his letters.

(Colossians 2:3) in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Some opponents of the Christian Church were members of the mystery religions that we sometimes think of as Gnosticism or preliminary to Gnosticism. These religions claimed to have and reveal mysterious knowledge about God and the future to their recruits through a succession of secret rituals. They sought to draw Christians into their circles or infiltrate and take over Christian churches. However, Paul wrote that all the treasures (true riches) of wisdom (an understanding of the truth and how best to live according to the truth—see the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes for examples) and knowledge (knowing and understanding facts about the true nature and character of the true God, the gospel, and reality that are the foundation for true wisdom—see the New Testament for example) are to be found in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the Church openly reveals true wisdom and knowledge by teaching about Jesus Christ openly for anyone to hear. The Christian Church has no secret rituals for members to pass through for enlightenment. The Christian Church has no secret books, and the Church makes the Bible available for anyone to read—and encourages everyone to read the Bible. The Church also encourages everyone to place their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; then, they will

understand more of the mysteries of Christ as they live under His lordship and leadership.

(Colossians 2:4) I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.

Jesus Christ gives wisdom to His followers that is never separate from knowing him and always involves him. Christ gives His followers wisdom and spiritual help that will enable them to recognize and understand enough of the arguments of unbelievers not to be misled by false ideas. Christians will be better prepared to quickly recognize and turn from those who would deceive them with what at first sounds like plausible arguments by thinking together (especially thinking about the truths revealed in the Bible) and by praying together. Paul prayed fervently that they would recognize false ideas and be able to avoid the traps set by false teachers.

(Colossians 2:5) For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

Paul wrote to them because he had heard about how disciplined they were as good soldiers for Christ, and about how firm their faith in Christ was as they fought the good fight of faith “in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left” (2 Corinthians 6:7). Paul wanted to encourage them as he had encouraged Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:12, to

“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses,” for they were in a battle for the Truth, the Church, their spiritual life in Christ, and their future.

(Colossians 2:6) So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him,

The Bible clearly teaches that the true followers of Jesus Christ will receive Jesus Christ as the Lord of their lives as well as the Lord over all creation. The Bible reveals that the true followers of Jesus Christ will receive Christ into their lives as both Lord and Savior, and not just as a Savior from sin or the Way to heaven, but also as the One who will live in them and enable them to live in him so they can do as He wills. When the followers of Jesus Christ in the New Testament called Jesus their Lord, they meant at least three things. First, Jesus Christ (the King) was their Master. Second, Caesar was not their Lord. Third, Jesus is the LORD (God). As Savior, Jesus reconciles us to God despite our past sins. As Lord, He leads us in the way of righteousness and peace. Salvation includes a believer's trusting in the power of Jesus Christ to help them follow Jesus Christ and His way of life in accordance with the Bible now and forever.

(Colossians 2:7) rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and

overflowing with thankfulness.

When we love God and seek to understand the will of God in Jesus Christ, in order to do His will and overcome temptations to do wrong, we will become less likely to turn from faith in Jesus Christ or lose our confidence in God our Father. Jesus Christ will help us grow in faith and enable us to understand and apply the Bible's teachings in our daily decisions. As we understand Jesus better and live closer to him spiritually, we will thank God more and more for all He does for us and for others through us. When we first come to faith in Jesus Christ, Jesus will begin to work within us to establish us in our faith in him so we will never fall away or cease to trust in him. As a mighty oak, through faith in Jesus Christ our spiritual relationship with God will grow down with "deep roots" and grow up strong enough to withstand the storms of life.

(Colossians 2:8) See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

The word philosophy means "love of wisdom." The study of philosophy is the study of human ideas, sometimes using and sometimes misusing good sound logic and reasoning. The word theology means the "science of God," or reasoning about God that should strive to create a system of ideas that can be found in the Bible and used to

interpret the Bible correctly; unfortunately, theological systems sometimes develop and spread ideas about God not found in the Bible. Good theology is drawn from the Bible as God's true revelation to us, without adding ideas not clearly found in the Bible. Bad theology imposes its ideas (human traditions and sometimes philosophy) on the Bible, misinterprets the Bible, and then tries to convince others to believe its teachings. Paul warned against believing bad theologies and philosophies which can captivate the mind and make it almost impossible to understand the Bible's teachings rightly. Some long dead philosophers and theologians have kept generations of their believers, and keep believers today, captive to their false ideas—misleading many. The study of philosophy or theology can appeal to human pride and influence some people to turn away from or reject the revelation of God to us in the Bible and in the life of Jesus Christ. The “love of wisdom” can lead us away from the love of God and into disobedience (as King Solomon demonstrated when he decided he was so wise he could worship the idols of his foreign wives that God had forbidden the Jews to marry—unless their wives first embraced the Jewish faith and came to worship the true God. Paul earnestly prayed for those he wrote to knowing they were facing these types of intellectual and spiritual challenges from Gentiles (and some Jews) who embraced the myths of the mystery religions and philosophy. Paul's letter warns us to avoid becoming a captive to ideas and teachings that are contrary to the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ. The

study of philosophy and theology can help some people understand the ideas of others in such a way that they can better and more convincingly share the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Bible's teachings with unbelievers and lead them to true faith. However, Paul recognized that philosophical and theological ideas also mislead many. Some put their philosophical or theological system above the Bible, and then misinterpret the Bible using their false philosophical or theological system. Elemental spiritual forces, demons, or ungodly spirits can also lead people into false beliefs, philosophies, and theologies, and these demons usually look for ways to use misunderstandings about God and the world to lead people further away from Jesus and trust in the Bible. In 1 Timothy 4:1. Paul wrote, "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."

(Colossians 2:9) For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

Paul emphasized the fact that the Son of God fully indwelt and fully united with the physical body of Jesus Christ on Earth when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (Colossians 1:19). Jesus Christ is fully God in a fully human body. Therefore, what Jesus said, demonstrated, and lived through at each moment was a true revelation from the true God, the truth about God, the truth about God's love and intentions, and the truth about the ways human beings should live spiritually and

mentally in their human bodies in this world. In John 14:9, Jesus revealed this fact better than I can describe it, “Jesus answered: ‘Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”””?

(Colossians 2:10) and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.

Some promote the study of philosophy, different world religions, and different religious practices, in order to teach that there is something lacking in our lives even if we do follow and trust in Jesus Christ. They deceive people into thinking that their philosophy or spiritual practice or religious technique can supply what is lacking in following Jesus according to the Scriptures. However, Paul emphasized that we have fullness, all the fullness we will ever need, in Jesus Christ, who will keep filling us as He expands our capacity to receive more of him through trusting and obeying him according to the Bible. No one is greater than Jesus Christ; therefore, we need no other spirit guides, demons, or practices adopted from other religions. Jesus Christ is the head over every ruler or authority; so, we should never accept a lesser ruler or authority to follow morally or spiritually contrary to the Scriptures, but always do as Jesus leads, and Jesus will always lead us morally and spiritually according to the Bible's teachings in the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Colossians 2:11) In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ,

In the New Testament, especially in Paul's writings, those who promoted physical circumcision as the Jews did needed to know the better way through Jesus Christ. Prior to trusting in and receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, we followed our emotions and desires and bodily cravings (the flesh) contrary to the Bible. Our spiritual circumcision by Jesus Christ will remove our slavery to the flesh and with the help of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures transform our thinking and enable us to know and follow the will of God—and even love God and desire to do the will of God at all times in our fight against temptations and sin.

(Colossians 2:12) having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

When we agreed to be buried with Christ in baptism, we rejected our old way of living in sin and we died to our old way of living apart from God, and we committed ourselves to live wholly for Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible. Through baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit, God the Father raised us to new life, a radically different way of life that seeks to live holy in Christ Jesus. After Jesus Christ

rose from the dead, He lived a different type of life—not morally different—He demonstrated different abilities in a glorified human body. We have divine power to live a morally and spiritually different life after our baptism. We will have different abilities after we receive our resurrected and glorified human bodies. Those who live immorally will not be trusted to live in the new heaven and earth with resurrected bodies that have the abilities Jesus demonstrated in His resurrected body. No believer in Christ would want to give immoral people the ability to walk through walls or appear and disappear in rooms at will. Heaven would soon become a hell for everyone if immoral people were given these supernatural powers in heaven, which makes hell a necessity.

(Colossians 2:13) When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

We can make a choice to be buried with Christ in baptism, but we cannot save ourselves from the eternal consequences of past and future trespasses. Because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, God the Father can make believers spiritually alive with Jesus Christ and thereby save all His followers from the eternal consequences of their past sins and future trespasses should they sin again as Christians in this life. Because Jesus Christ died as a sacrifice for us, God can forgive us, mercifully and justly forgive us, for our sins. He can also

save us from the practice of sins when we are tempted. If we go to Jesus in trusting, fervent prayer for help to obey him, Jesus will be the Way we need. Jesus will show us the way of escaping temptations, and He will give us the power to overcome our temptations.

(Colossians 2:14) having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

Jesus Christ lived a morally and spiritually perfect life. Jesus always obeyed and upheld God's law. He lived and died as a perfect example and teacher. Because of our sins, Jesus came to die as a perfect and holy sacrifice for us. When Jesus Christ died on the cross for us, God fulfilled His holy and righteous law when He accepted Jesus' death as a substitute for the death we deserve. God loves us and because Jesus died a sacrificial death as a substitute for us, God graciously forgives us and sets aside the legal demands of the law that as a consequence of our sins we should die forever. When we think of how much God the Father and Jesus love us, enough for the Father to send His only begotten Son to die for us, we cannot help but love God and Jesus more and thank Jesus for His saving us from our sins and their consequences. Our love for God will inspire us to live in ways that will be a moral and spiritual example and bless God and others.

(Colossians 2:15) And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

The purposes of the worldly and otherworldly rulers and authorities that opposed God when Jesus died on the cross were defeated when God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. He made them into a public example of what can happen when anyone opposes or rebels against God—God will win the victory. When we live holy and wholly for God, as Christ Jesus works in us, those who oppose the true God and the gospel of Jesus Christ become a public example of what everyone should avoid. In addition, we become a public example of how to live victoriously as God conquers evil through us—even if we suffer or die a martyr’s death—even as Jesus is a public example of faithfulness to God the Father and to those He died to save.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What is the mystery of God, and where can we find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
2. Why can the Scriptures be trusted more than philosophy and human traditions?
3. How can the study of philosophy or human traditions be harmful? How can the study of philosophy or human traditions be helpful?
4. What are and how might the “elemental spirits of the universe” mislead someone or take someone captive?

5. What are some of the blessings from God that Christians can enjoy?

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